

Cornaro's Treatise

O F

Temperance and Sobriety.

Shewing the right way of preserving

LIFE and HEALTH;

Together with Soundness of the
Senses, Judgment, and Memory.
unto extream old Age.



D U B L I N:

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Cornaro's Treatise O F TEMPERANCE.



AVING observ'd in my time many of my Friends of excellent Wit and noble Disposition, overthrown and undone by Intemperance; who if they had liv'd, would have been an Ornament to the World; and a Comfort to their Friends.

I thought fit to discover in a short Treatise, that Intemperance was not such an Evil, but it might easily be Remedied; which I undertake the more willingly, because divers worthy Young Men have oblig'd me unto it.

For when they saw their Parents and Kindred snatcht away in the midst of their Days, and me contrariwise at the Age of Eighty and

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One, Strong and Lusty, they had a great desire to know the way of my Life, and how I came to be so.

Wherefore that I may satisfie their honest Desire, and withal help many others, who will take this into Consideration, I will declare the Causes which mov'd me to forsake Intemperance, and live a sober Life, expressing also the Means which I have used therein.

I say therefore that the infirmities, which did not only begin, but had already gone far in me, first caus'd me to leave Intemperance to which I was much addicted: For by it, and my ill Constitution, (having a most cold and moist Stomach) I fell into divers Diseases, *viz.* Into the Pain of the Stomach, and often of the Side, and the beginning of the Gout, with almost a continual Fever and Thirst.

From this ill Temper there remained little else to be expected of me, than that after many Troubles and Griefs I should quickly come to an End; whereas my Life seem'd as far from it by Nature, as it was near it by Intemperance.

When therefore I was thus afflicted from the thirty fifth Year of my Age to the fortieth, having tried all Remedies fruitlesly, the Physicians told me that yet there was one help for me if I could constantly pursue it, *viz.*

A sober and orderly Life; for this had every way great Force for the recovering and preserving of Health, as a disorderly Life to the overthrowing of it, as I too well by Experience found:

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found: For Temperance preserves even Old Men and sickly Men Sound: But Intemperance destroys most healthy and flourishing Constitutions: For contrary Causes have contrary Effects, and the Faults of Nature are often amended by Art, as barren Grounds are made fruitful by good Husbandry. They added withal, that unless I speedily used that Remedy, within a few Months I should be driven to that Exigent, that there would be no help for me, but Death shortly to be expected.

Upon this, weighing their Reasons with my self, and abhorring so sudden an End, and finding my self, continually oppress'd with Pain and Sicknes, I grew fully perswaded that all my Griefs arose out of Intemperance; and therefore out of a Hope of avoiding Death and Pain, I resolv'd to live a temperate Life.

Whereupon being directed by them in the way I ought to hold, I understood that the Food I was to use, was such as belong'd to sickly Constitutions, and that in a small Quantity. This they had told me before: But I then not liking that kind of Diet, follow'd my Appetite, and did eat Meats pleasing to my Taste; and when I felt inward Heats, drank delightful Wines, and that in great Quantity, telling my Physicians nothing therof; as is the Custom of sick People: But after I had resolved to follow Temperance and Reason; and saw that it was no hard thing to do so, but the pro-

per duty of Man; I so addicted my self to this Course of Life, that I never went a Foot out of the Way.

Upon this, I found within a few Days that I was exceedingly helped, and by Continuance thereof, within les than one Year, (although it may seem to some incredible) I was perfectly cur'd of all my Infirmitie.

Being now sound and well, I began to consider the force of Temperance, and to think thus with my self.

If Temperance had so much Power as to bring me Health, how much more to preserve it; wherefore I began to search out most diligently what Meats were agreeable to me, and what disagreeable: And I purposed to try, whether those that pleas'd my Taste brought me Commodity or Discommodity; and whether that Proverb, wherewith Gluttons use to defend themselves, viz. That which savors is good and nourisheth, be consonant to Truth: This upon Trial I found most false, for strong and very cool Wines pleas'd my Taste best, as also Melons, and other Fruit; in like manner, raw Lettice, Fish, Pork, Sausages, Pulse, and Cake, and Pye-Crust, and the like; and yet all these I found hurtful.

Therefore trusting on Experience, I forsook all these kind of Meats and Drinks, and chose that Wine that fitterd my Stomach, and in such Measure as easily might be digested: Above all took care never to rise with a full Stomach,

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much, but so as I might well both eat and drink more.

By this Means within less than a Year I was not only freed from all those Evils which had so long beset me, and were almost become incurable; but also afterwards I fell not into that yearly Disease, whereunto I was wont, when I pleas'd my Sense and Appetite.

Which Benefits also still continue, because from the time that I was made whole, I never since departed from my settled Course of Sobriety, whose admirable Power causeth that the Meat and Drink that is taken in fit Measure, gives true Strength to the Body, all Superfluities passing away without Difficulty, and no ill Humours being engendered in the Body.

Yet with this Diet I avoided other hurtful Things also, as too much Heat and Cold, Weariness, Watching, ill Air, overmuch use of the benefit of Marriage.

For although the power of Health consists most in the Proportion of Meat and Drink, yet these forenamed Things have also their Force.

I preserved me also as much as I could, from Hatred and Melancholy and other Perturbations of the Mind, which have a great Power over our Constitutions: Yet could I not so avoid all these, but that now and then I fell into them; which gain'd me this Experience; that I perceiv'd, that they had no great Power to hurt those Bodies which were kept in good order.

order by a moderate Diet ; so that I can truly say, that they who in these two Things that enter into the Mouth, keep a fit Proportion, shall receive little hurt from other Excesses.

This *Galen* confirms, when he says that, immoderate Heats and Colds; and Winds and Labours did little hurt him, because in his Meats and Drinks he kept a due Moderation ; and therefore never was sick by any of these Inconveniences, except it were for one only Day.

But my own Experience confirms this more, as all that know me can testify ; for having endured many Heats and Colds, and other like Discommodities of the Body, and Troubles of Mind, all these did hurt me little, whereasthey hurt them very much who live intemperately. For when my Brother and others of my Kindred saw some great powerful Men pick Quarrels against me, fearing lest I should be overthrown, they were possess'd with a deep Melancholy (a thing usual to disorderly Lives) which increased so much in them that it brought them to a sudden End. But I, whom that Matter ought to have affected most, receiv'd no Inconveniency thereby, because that Humour abounded not in me.

Nay, I began to persuade my self, that this Suit and Contention, was raised by divine Providence, that I might know what great Power a sober and temperate Life hath over our Bodies and Minds, and that at length I should be a Conqueror, as

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also a little after it came to pass; for in the End I got the Victory, to my great Honour, and no less Profit, whereupon also I joy'd exceedingly, which excess of Joy neither could done any Hurt.

By which it is manifest that neither Melancholy, or any other Passion can hurt a temperate Life.

Moreover I say, that even Bruises, and Squats, and Falls, which often kill others, can bring little Grief or Hurt to those that are Temperate.

This I found by Experience, when I was seventy Years old: For riding in a Coach in great haste, it happen'd that the Coach was overturn'd, and I was then dragg'd for a good Space by the fury of the Horses, whereby my Head and whole Body was sorely hurt, and also one of my Arms and Legs was put out of Joint. Being carried home, when the Physicians saw in what Case I was, they concluded that I would die in three Days. Nevertheless at a Venture two Remedies might be used, letting of Blood, and Purging, that the store of Humours, and Inflammation and Fever (which was certainly expected) might be hindred.

But I considering what an orderly Life I had led for many Years together, which must needs so temper the Humours of the Body that they could not be much troubled, or make a great Concourse, refus'd both Remedies, and only commanded that my Arm and Leg should be

Set,

Set, and my whole Body anointed with Oil: And so without other Remedy or Inconvenience I recover'd; which seem'd as a Miracle to the Physicians. Whence I conclude that they that live a temperate Life, can receive little hurt from other Inconveniences.

But my Experience taught me another thing also, *viz.* That an orderly and regular Life, can hardly be altered without exceeding great Danger.

About four Years since, I was led by the advice of Physicians, and the daily importunity of my Friends, to add something to my usual Stint and Measure. Divers Reasons they brought, as that old Age could not be sustain'd with so little Meat and Drink; which yet needs not only to be sustain'd, but also to gather Strength, which could not be but by Meat and Drink. On the other side I argued, that Nature was contented with a little, and that I had for many Years continu'd in good Health, with a little Measure; that Custom was turn'd into Nature, and therefore it was agreeable to Reason, that my Years increasing, and Strength decreasing, my stint of Meat and Drink should be diminished rather than increased; that the Patient might be proportionable to the Agent, and especially since the Power of my Stomach every Day decreased.

To this agreed two Italian Proverbs, *viz.* *He that will eat much, let him eat little; because by eating little he prolongs his Life.* The other:

other Proverb was, *The Meat which remaineth, profits more than that which is eaten.* By which is intimated, that the hurt of too much Meat is greater than the Commodity of Meat taken in a moderate Proportion.

But all these Things could not defend me against their Importunities. Therefore to avoid Obstinacy, and gratifie my Friends, at length I yielded, and permitted the quantity of Meat to be increased, yet but two Ounces only. For whereas before the measure of my whole Days Meat, *viz.* of my Bread, and Eggs, and Flesh, and Broth, was twelve Ounces exactly weighed; I increased it to the quantity of two Ounces more: And the measure of my Drink which before was fourteen Ounces, I made now sixteen.

This Addition after ten Days wrought so much upon me, that of a cheerful and merry Man, I became Melancholy and Cholerick; so that all Things were troublesome to me; neither did I know well what I did or said. On the Twelfth Day, a pain of the Side took me, which held me twenty two Hours. Upon the Neck of it came a terrible Fever, which continu'd thirty five Days and Nights, although after the fifteenth Day it grew less and less. Besides all this, I could not sleep, no not a quarter of an Hour, whereupon all gave me for Dead.

Neverthe-

Nevertheless, I by the grace of God, cured my self only with returning to my former Course of Diet, although I was now Seventy eight Years old, and my Body spent with extreme Leanness, and the season of the Year was Winter, and most cold Air. And I am confident, that under God nothing helpt me, but that exact Rule which I had so long continu'd. In all which time I felt no Grief, save now and then a little Indisposition for a Day or two.

For the Temperance of so many Years spent all ill Humours, and suffer'd not any new of that kind to arise, neither the good Humours to be corrupted, or contract any ill Quality, as usually happens in old Mens Bodies, which live without Rule. For there is no Malignity of old Age in the Humours of my Body, which commonly kills Men. And that new one which I contracted by breaking my Diet, altho' it was a sore Evil, yet had no power to kill me.

By this it may clearly be perceiv'd, how great is the power of Order and Disorder; whereof the one kept me well for many Years, the other, tho' it was but a little Excess, in a few Days had so soon overthrown me.

If the World consist of Order, if our corporal Life depend on the Harmony of Humours and Elements, it is no wonder that Order should preserve, and Disorder destroy. Order makes Arts easy, and Armies Victorious, and

and retains and confirms Kingdoms, Cities and Families in Peace. Wheare I conclude that an orderly Life is the most sure Way and Ground of Health and long Days, and the true and only Medicine of many Diseases.

Neither can any Man deny this, who will narrowly consider it. Hence it comes, that a Physician when he comes to visit his Patient, prescribes this Physick first, that he use a moderate Diet: And when he hath cur'd him, commends this also to him, if he will live in Health; neither is it to be doubted, but that he shall ever after live free from Diseases, if he will keep such a Course of Life: Because this will cut off all Causes of Diseases, so that he shall need neither Physick nor Physician.

Yea if he will give his Mind to those Things which he should, he will prove himself a Physician, and that a very compleat one: For indeed no Man can be a perfect Physician to another, but to himself only. The Reason whereof is this, every one by long Experience may know the Qualities of his own Nature, and what hidden Properties it hath, what Meat and Drink agrees best with it; which things in others cannot be known without such Observation, as is not easily to be made upon others; especially since there is a greater diversity of Tempers than of Faces. Who would believe that old Wine should hurt my Stomach, and new should help it, or that Cinnamon should heat me more than Pepper? What Physician

could have discover'd these hidden Qualities to me, if I had not found them out by long Experience? Wherefore one to another cannot be a perfect Physician. Whereupon I conclude, since none can have a better Physician than himself, nor better Physick than a temperate Life, Temperance by all Means is to be embrac'd.

Nevertheless, I deny not, but that Physicians are necessary, and greatly to be esteem'd for the knowing and curing of Diseases, into which they often fall, who live disorderly: For if a Friend who visits thee in thy Sicknes, and only comforts and condoles, doth perform an acceptable thing to thee, how much more dearly should a Physician be esteem'd who not only as a Friend doth visit thee, but help thee?

But that a Man may preserve himself in Health, I advise, that instead of a Physician, a regular Life is to be embraced, which as is manifest by Experience, is a natural Physick most agreeable to us, and also doth preserve even ill Tempers in good Health, and procure that they prolong their Life even to a hundred Years or more, and at length shut up their Days like a Lamp, only by a pure Consumption of their radical Moisture, without Grief or Perturbation of Humours. Many have thought that this could be done by *Aurum Potabile*, or *Philosophers Stone*, sought of many and found

of few. But surely there is no such Matter, if Temperance be wanting.

But sensual Men (as most are) desiring to satisfy their Appetite, and pamper their Bellies, altho' they see themselves ill handled by their Intemperance, yet shun a sober Life: because they say, it is better so to please the Appetite, (tho' they live ten Years less than otherwise they should do) than always to live under Bit and Bridle.

But they consider not, of how great Moment ten Years are in mature Age, wherein Wisdom and all kinds of Virtues are most vigorous, which but in that Age can hardly be perfected. And that I may say nothing of other Things, are not almost all the learned Books that we have, written by their Authors, in that Age, and those ten Years, which they set a-nought in regard of their Belly?

Besides these Belly Gods say, that an orderly Life is so hard a Thing that it cannot be kept,

To this I answer, that *Galen* kept it, and held it for the best Physick: So did *Plato*, and *Isocrates*, and *Tully*, and many others of the Ancients; and in our Age, *Paul the Third* and *Cardinal Bembo*, who therefore liv'd so long; and among other Dukes, *Laudus* and *Donatus*, and many others of inferior Condition, not only in the City, but also in Villages and Hamlets.

Wherefore since many have observ'd a regular Life, both of old Times and of later Years, it is no such thing which may not be performed;

form'd; especially since in observing it, there needs not many and curious things, but only that a Man should begin, and by little and little accustom himself to it.

Neither doth it hinder what *Plato* says, that they who are employ'd in the Commonwealth, cannot live regularly, because they must often indure Heats and Colds, and Winds, and Showers, and divers Labours; which suit not with an orderly Life: For I answer that those Inconveniences are of no great Moment, (as I shew'd before) if a Man be temperate in Meat and Drink, which is both easy for Common-weals Men, and very convenient both that they may preserve themselves from Diseases, which hinder publick Employment; as also that their Mind in all Things wherein they deal may be more lively and vigorous.

But some may say, he that leads a regular Life eating always light Meats, and in a little Quantity, what Diet shall he use in Diseases, which being in Health he hath Anticipated?

I answer first, Nature, which endeavours to preserve a Man as much as She can, teaches us how to govern our selves in Sickness: For suddenly it takes away our Appetite, so that we can eat but a very little, wherewith she is very well contented: So that a sick Man, whether he hath liv'd heretofore orderly or disorderly, when he is Sick ought not to eat, but such Meats as are agreeable to his Disease, and that in much smaller Quantities than when he was

Was well. For if he should keep his former Proportion, Nature, which is already Burdened with a Disease would be wholly Oppressed. Secondly, I answere better, that he which lives a temperate Life, cannot fall into Diseases, and but very seldom into Indispositions; because Temperance takes away the Causes of Diseases; and the Cause being taken away, there is no place for the Effect.

Wherefore since an orderly Life is so profitable, so Virtuous, so Decent, and so Holy, it is worthy by all Means to be embraced; especially since it is easy and most agreeable to the nature of Man. No Man that follows it, is bound to Eat and Drink so little as I: No Man is forbidden to Eat Fruit or Fish, which I eat not; For I eat little, because a little sufficeth my weak Stomach: and I abstain from Fruit, and Fish, and the like, because they hurt me. But they who find benefit in these Meats, may, yea, ought to use them: Yet all must needs take heed, lest they take a greater quantity of any Meat or Drink (tho' most agreeable to them) than their Stomach can easily digest, so that he which is offended with no kind of Meat and Drink, hath the Quantity and not the Quality for his Rule, which is very easy to be observ'd.

Let no Man here object unto me, that there are many, who tho' they live disorderly, yet continue in Health to their Lives End: because, since this is at the best but uncertain, dangerous; and but very rare, the presuming upon it ought not to lead us to a disorderly Life. It

It is not the part of a Wise Man to expose himself to so many dangers of Diseases and Death, only upon a hope of an happy Issue, which yet befalls very few. An old Man of an ill Constitution, but living orderly, is more sure of Life, than the most strong young Man who lives disorderly.

But some too much given to Appetite, object, that a long Life is no such desirable Thing, because that after one is once 65 Years old, all the time we live after, is rather Death than Life. But these err greatly, as I will shew by my self, recounting the Delights and Pleasures in this Age of 83, which now I take, and which are such, as that Men generally count me happy.

I am continually in Health, and I am so nimble, that I can easily get on Horseback without the advantage of the Ground, and Sometimes I go up high Stairs and Hills on Foot. Then I am ever cheerful, merry, and well contented, free from all Troubles and troublesome Thoughts; in whose Place Joy and Peace have taken up their Standing in my Heart. I am not weary of Life, which I pass with great Delight. I confer often with worthy Men, excelling in Wit, Learning, Behaviour, and other Virtues. When I cannot have their Company, I give my self to the reading of some learned Book, and afterwards to Writing; making it my Aim in all Things, how I may help others to the furthest of my Power.

All these Things I do at my ease, and at the Seasons, and in my own Houses; which, besides that they are in the fairest Place of this learned City of Padua, are very beautiful and Convenient above most in this Age, being so built by me according to the rules of Architecture, that they are cool in Summer and warm in Winter.

I enjoy also my Gardens, and those divers, parted with rills of running Water, which truly is very delightful. At some times of the Year I enjoy the Pleasure of the Eugenian Hills, where also I have Fountains and Gardens, and a very convenient House. At other times I repair to a Village of mine, seated in the Valley; which is therefore very pleasant, because many ways thither are so ordered, that they all meet and end in a fair Plot of Ground; in the midst whereof is a Church suitable to the Condition of the Place. This Place is washed with the River Brenta; on both sides whereof are great and fruitful Fields, well manur'd and adorn'd with many Habitations. In former time it was not so, because the place was moorish and unhealthy, fitter for Beasts than Men; But I drain'd the Ground, and made the Air good.

Whereupon Men stok'd thither, and built Houses with happy success: By this Means the Place is come to that Perfection we now find it is: So that I can truly say, that I have both.

both given God a Temple and Men to worship him in it : The Memory whereof is exceeding delightful to me.

Sometimes I ride to some of the neighbouring Cities, that I may enjoy the Sight and Communication of my Friends, as also of excellent Artificers, Architecture, Painting, Stone-cutting, Musick, and Husbandry, whereof in this Age there is great Plenty. I view their Pieces, I compare them with those of Antiquity, and ever I learn somewhat which is worthy of my Knowledge : I survey Palaces, Gardens, Antiquities, publick Fabricks, Temples and Fortifications : Neither omit I any thing that may either teach, or delight me. I am much pleas'd also in my Travels, with the Beauty of Situation.

Neither is this my Pleasure made less by the decaying dulness of my Senses, which are all in perfect Vigour, but especially my Taste, so that any simple Fare is more savoury to me now, than heretofore, when I was given to Disorder, all the Delights that could be.

To change my Bed troubles me not, I sleep well and quietly any where, and my Dreams are fair and Pleasant. But this chiefly delights me, that my Advice hath taken effect in the reducing of many rude and uncultivated untoiled Places in my Country to Cultivation and good Husbandry. I was one of those that was deputed for the managing of that Work,

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and abode in those fenny Places two whole Months in the heat of Summer (which in *Italy* is very great) receiving not any hurt or Inconvenience thereby : So great is the Power and Efficacy of that Temperance which ever accompanied me.

These are the Delights and Solaces of my old Age which is altogether to be preferr'd before others Youth. Because that by Temperance and the Grace of God I feel not those Perturbations of Body and Mind, wherewith infinite both Young and Old are afflicted.

Moreover, by this also, in what estate I am, may be discover'd, because at these Years (viz. 83) I have made a most pleasant Comedy, full of honest Wit and Merriment. Which kind of Poem useth to be the Child of Youth, which it most suits withal for Variety and Pleasantness; as a Tragedy with old Age, by reason of the sad Events which it contains. And if a Greek Poet of old was praised, that at the Age of 73 Years he writ a Tragedy; why should I be accounted less happy, or less myself, who being ten Years older have made a Comedy? Now less there should be any Delight wanting to my old Age, I daily behold a kind of Immortality in the succession of my Posterity: For when I come home I find eleven Grand Children of mine, all the Sons of one Father and Mother, all in perfect Health; all as far as I can conjecture, very apt and well given, both for Learning and Behavior.

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our, I am delighted with their Musick and Fashion, and I my self also sing often because I have a clearer Voice, than ever I had in my Life.

By which it is evident, that the Life which I live at this Age, is not a dead, dumpish, and sower Life: But cheerful, lively and pleasant. Neither if I had my Wish, would I change Age and Constitution with them who follow their youthful Appetites, altho' they be of most strong Temper: Because such are daily expos'd to a thousand Dangers and Deaths, as daily Experience sheweth, and I also, when I was a young Man, too well found.

I know how inconsiderate that Age is, and, tho' subject to Death, yet continually afraid of it, for Death to all young Men is a terrible Thing, as also to those that live in Sin, and follow their Appetites: Whereas I by the Experience of so many Years have learn'd to give way to Reason: whence it seems to me, not only a shameful Thing to fear that which cannot be avoided; but also I hope when I shall come to that Point, I shall find no little Comfort in the favour of *Jesus Christ.*

Yet I am sure that my End is far from me: For I know that (leaving Casualties aside) I shall not die but by a pure Resolution: Because that by the regularity of my Life, I have shut out Death all other ways. And that is a fair and desirable Death, which Nature brings by way of Resolution.

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Since therefore a temperate Life is so happy and pleasant a Thing ; what remains but that I should wish all who have the care of themselves, to embrace it with open Arms.

Many Things more might be said in Commendation hereof; but left in any thing I forsake that Temperance which I have found so good, I here make an end.



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